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AN  
HISTORICAL SKETCH,

DELIVERED AT THE CLOSING SERVICES,

IN

ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH,

NEW YORK,

On the First Sunday in July, 1866,

BY

REV. JOSEPH H. PRICE, D. D.,

RECTOR OF THE CHURCH.

NEW YORK:

VINTEN, STEAM PRINTER, 100 NASSAU STREET.

1866.

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3327  
TO THE

WARDENS, VESTRY AND CONGREGATION

—OF—

St. Stephen's Church,

WHO HAVE STEADFASTLY BELIEVED IN HIS INTEGRITY, AND  
CHARITABLY EXCUSED HIS IMPERFECTIONS,

THIS HISTORICAL SKETCH

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY

YOUR RECTOR.

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“For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath.”—90th PSALM, part of the 9th verse.

WHEREVER there is sin, there is suffering; wherever there is suffering, there is the anger of the superior Being, who causes or permits the suffering. “For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath.” We constantly feel some effect or other of thine anger, whereby our lives decline exceeding fast; few and evil are the days of our pilgrimage. Our lives pass away in the vanity of sin, and in the miseries of this evil world, and at last we sink in death oppressed with a sense of thy wrath.

All this is true of human life and the various circumstances that make up human life, apart from that remedial and blessed dispensation of divine mercy that can transmute every evil and make it administer good.

Our lives, whether we pursue knowledge or pleasure, or fame or riches, for themselves alone, are vanity, nay, vanity of vanities. The changes and chances of this mortal life, to which we are constantly subjected, come from the prolific mother Sin, and unless brought to the Christian touchstone, and pronounced genuine, will entail upon us more or less of misery.

One of these changes brings together to-day this large congregation of sympathizers.

We take leave to-day of this venerable friend—this old edifice—consecrated to God more than sixty years ago. It has

been faithfully fulfilling the great purpose of its mission during the whole of that period. Can we part with this old friend without a pang? Our American classic, in a passage of his "Sketch Book" distinguished for the correctness of its sentiment as well as the beauty of its language, says: "O the grave, the grave! it buries every error, covers every defect, extinguishes every resentment! From its bosom spring none but fond regrets and tender recollections. Who can look down upon the grave, even of an enemy, and not feel a compunctious throb that he should ever have warred with the poor handful of earth that lies mouldering before him?"

With some abatement, we might adopt this sentiment when we part with this venerable friend, not dead nor dying, yet with whom, in the same relation in which we now stand, we never expect to meet again. But our old friend cannot reciprocate our endearments, being inert matter, incapable of emotion; so we must resort to personification to give our language any meaning.

But this man of wood and stone has one advantage over some intelligent beings. If he is without some of their virtues, he has none of their vices. He never forged a slander, his neighbor's fame to wound, nor propagated one forged by others, nor cried out lustily for the freedom to slander through the press, nor sate in severe judgment on well-intended efforts in ministerial duty, nor contributed to degrade that duty to the low level of a caterer for public amusement. No! he has looked down with the same calm benignity on friend and foe; on victorious and defeated parties; on contested elections and the burial of the contestants; on the true-hearted and sincere, and the hollow-hearted and hypocritical; on those who served themselves and those who served the Lord Christ.

But come, my old friend, suppose you give us a rapid recital of what you have witnessed;—not all,—for that would be somewhat tedious; but a condensed account of the more interesting matters. What? you are silent! Oh, I forgot that you were educated when modesty was a virtue—and that is a long while ago. Modesty now finds itself safe only in the Insane Asylum. Well, as I belong to a recent age, let me discharge the duty for you.



Beloved brethren, who have belonged, or do now belong, to this congregation—The first effective meeting for the erection of this church was held on the 12th day of March, 1805. A committee was appointed to take all legal measures to become, under the law, a religious society. The committee were the Rev. Mr. Stroebeck, Cornelius Schuyler and Isaac Emmons.

At a meeting held April 1st, 1805, it was resolved, that three lots of ground, on the south-east corner of First and Bullock streets, be purchased of Mr. Ray, for the purpose of the erection of a church, and that Cornelius Schuyler, Thomas Gibbons and Jordan Mott be a committee to carry out this resolution.

At the first election held in a public and legal way, on April 19th, 1805, being Easter Monday, Cornelius Schuyler and Thomas Gibbons were elected wardens, and Jacob C. Mott, Jordan Mott, Abraham Fowler, Isaac Emmons, Benjamin Clark, Benjamin Beekman, George Beck and George Fash were elected vestrymen.

On the 22d of April, 1805, the Rev. Mr. Stroebeck was invited to the Rectorship, and being present at the meeting, accepted. Though not a matter of record, it is a matter of trustworthy tradition, that this church originated in what proves the truth: "That we have this treasure in earthen vessels." Mr. Stroebeck was the minister of a Lutheran church in Mott street. He and the mass of his congregation conformed to the Church. Soon after this event a disaffection sprung up toward him in the congregation. It was too serious to be resisted, and his friends retired from Zion Church, and together with others proposed the erection of this church as an act of friendship to him.

December 6th, 1805, the corporation of Trinity Church granted to this church three thousand dollars.

On the 26th of December, 1805, being St. Stephen's Day, this church was consecrated to the service of Almighty God by the Right Rev. Benjamin Moore, Bishop of the Diocese of New York. The Rev. Mr. Harris, Rector of St. Mark's Church in the Bowery, read divine service, and the Rev. Cave

Jones, an assistant minister of Trinity Church, preached from Acts vii., 55. The original estimates for this building were four thousand six hundred and fifty dollars, exclusive of the land. But at various times more money was expended even by our prudent fathers.

In the month of April, 1808, the vestry of Trinity Church presented to the corporation of St. Stephen's, in bonds and cash, seven thousand two hundred and fifty-four dollars and fifty-eight cents, to meet some special pressing demand on this body. In the same year Trinity Church gave to this church three lots of land, one situated on Greenwich, and two on Warren street. These lots yielded, in 1809, four hundred dollars per annum. They are still in the possession of this church, and constitute the only certain income to meet its current expenses. The leases expired a few years since, and on their release, under the judicious counsel of a member of the vestry, they have been made to yield much more.

And here let me acknowledge, once for all, the debt of gratitude this church owes to the venerable corporation of Trinity Church. Though the amount has been, as usual, greatly over estimated by the Church public, so that it has been considered abundantly adequate to support the Rector and defray all current expenses, and supposed quite equal to those princely endowments bestowed by Trinity Church on St. Mark's, St. George's and Grace Church; and the present Rector has suffered much from these false estimates; and though that amount, under the present Rectorship, has not been increased, but diminished, yet the gift was generous, and the Rector, therefore, as the head of the corporation of St. Stephen's Church, makes this acknowledgment. (1.)

April 25th, 1809, the Rev. Mr. Stroebeck, in an unexpected and informal manner, resigned the Rectorship, having occupied it about four years.

I have nothing to say concerning the efficiency or inefficiency of Mr. Stroebeck's ministry in this church. If inefficient, then it must be acknowledged that the compensation for his services, small and uncertain in its payment, was a fair offset to his deficiency. I think our better way is to let the

poor man rest, and believe that the most ungrateful task any man can undertake is, to sow the seed from which others are to reap the fruit. There are more martyrs in the church militant than are honored in the Church's calendar.

Five days after this resignation, the Rev. Dr. Richard Channing Moore, then officiating in Richmond, Staten Island, was elected to the Rectorship, and on the 2d of June, 1809, he formally accepted; the Rectorship having been vacant only twenty-four days.

In August, 1809, Mr. John Pollion gave the tablet now over the front door of the church. Dr. Moore was instituted October 6th, 1809. The Rev. Cave Jones preached the sermon. In 1810, Mrs. Mary Delancey gave the service of communion plate still in use. It was a most valuable and pious gift. Would there were more such honorable women in the Church!

On the 10th of May, 1810, a petition, with the name of Mr. George Warner at the head of the list of subscribers, was presented for leave to erect a chapel of ease, so that many for whom there was no room in St. Stephen's might enjoy a portion of Dr. Moore's very acceptable services. The vestry received the proposition coldly, fearing that eventually it would involve St. Stephen's in debt, and so it was dropped.

The Rev. Dr. Moore, while Rector of this church, was elected Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia, and consecrated to that high office on the 18th of May, 1814. He resigned the Rectorship, May 26th, 1814; so that he remained Rector a few days after he was Bishop. St. Stephen's enjoys the distinction of having been, for a few days at least, a cathedral. He was Rector about five years.

Bishop Moore's ministry in this church was eminently successful. He was a perfect gentleman of the old school. He was genial to a degree that in this age would bring one under suspicion. His preaching was simple, direct, earnest and evangelical. It was not remarkable for theological learning, or breadth or depth of thought, but was addressed by a loving heart to the consciences of his hearers, and found a ready reception everywhere. He spoiled this congregation for any

severe presentation of divine truth. He scarcely knew of any way of serving God but from love.

On the 3d day of June, 1814, the Rev. Dr. Feltus, then Rector of St. Ann's Church, Brooklyn, was elected Rector, on a salary of fifteen hundred dollars, and declined. The call was repeated on the 8th of June, 1814, on a salary of seventeen hundred and fifty dollars, and accepted. On October 23d, 1823, the land on which the church stands was purchased : till then it had been leased.

During the Rectorship of Dr. Feltus, it was proposed to build a new church in the Bowery, but the purpose was never effected. The gift of Zion Church was asked from Trinity Church, provided it could be without incumbrance. In 1823, a lot adjoining the church was purchased of Philip Hone, Esq. In 1825, an organ, costing nine hundred and fifty dollars, was first introduced into the church.

The playfulness of Dr. Feltus' temper is aptly illustrated by a singular event of his administration. A contested election on some point supposed to involve materially the interests of the Rector was expected at Easter. The feeling in the parish was at boiling temperature. The ladies, as usual, did not fail to sympathize. Accordingly, the mass of females, with more zeal than order, presented themselves at the polls and offered their ballots. Dr. Feltus, as presiding officer, was embarrassed ; on a moment's thought, however, he saved his gallantry by accepting the ballots, and his submission to law by quietly putting the ballots under the table. I wonder if our legislators will be able as easily to dispose of the question of woman's rights.

Dr. Feltus, after an illness of four weeks, died on the 10th of August, 1828, having been Rector fourteen years. His death produced a great sensation throughout the city, both within and without the church. On account of the intense heat of the weather, he was buried on the day after his death, Monday, August 11th, 1828. At the funeral services the pallbearers were Drs. Harris, Lyell, Barry, Onderdonk, Wainright, Berrian, Milnor and the Rev. Mr. Creighton. The officiating clergy were Drs. Wainright, Lyell and Milnor, and

an appropriate and impressive address was delivered by Dr. Onderdonk.

The church was crowded to its utmost capacity, and the streets through which the procession passed were filled with sympathizing multitudes. Appropriate resolutions were passed by the vestry of this church, and the various bodies in the church, and among the sects, to which his pleasant face was familiar.

Dr. Feltus was held in deservedly high estimation by all who knew him. He had all the better qualities of an Irish gentleman. He had the national vivacity, wit, quickness of apprehension, readiness in retort, enjoyment of a good joke; and, at the same time, a most devoted attachment to his clerical duties, and a most popular method of discharging them.

He was fond of his books, but no less fond of social life, so that he was equally interesting in the pulpit and out of it. I am more and more persuaded every day that he was not taken from this parish before he had made a mark upon it, never to be effaced. If it were lawful to envy, such a life and such a death might well be the subject of envy. Mrs. Feltus, too, most satisfactorily filled her station as a minister's wife. On the whole, he was a man distinguished for the blessings he had instrumentally conferred on others, and for the blessings divine Providence had conferred on him.

On November 6th, 1828, the Rev. Levi S. Ives, then Rector of St. Luke's Church in this city, was elected Rector, and on the 14th of the same month he declined the invitation. This is the gentleman who was subsequently Bishop of North Carolina, and who laid down his mitre and episcopal prerogatives at the feet of the Bishop of Rome, commonly known to the world as the Pope. Pity for his weakness restrains me from any comment on a course of conduct so strangely ludicrous.

December 10th, 1828, the Rev. John Henry Hopkins, Rector of Trinity Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was elected Rector, and on December 29th, 1828, he declined. He was subsequently assistant minister of Trinity Church, Boston, and since 1832, Bishop of Vermont, and now, since the death of Bishop Brownell, is the honored senior Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.



On the 8th of January, 1829, the Rev. Henry Anthon, then Rector of Trinity Church, Utica, New York, was elected Rector. On January 19, 1829, Dr. Anthon accepted. The Rectorship had been vacant five months and nine days. On May 17th, 1829, Dr. Anthon was instituted by Bishop Hobart, and in about a year and a half from this time Bishop Hobart died. On the 17th of January, 1831, Dr. Anthon resigned, having received an invitation to Trinity Church in this city. He held the Rectorship about two years. His scholarship and talent always commanded the respect, and his faithfulness in pastoral duty the affection, of the congregation.

On the 19th of January, 1831, two days after the resignation of Dr. Anthon, the Rev. Francis L. Hawks was unanimously elected Rector. Dr. Hawks' Rectorship was a splendid triumph. Crowds flocked from all quarters to hear the great preacher. On the 3d of March, 1831, Dr. Hawks was instituted, and on December 8th, 1831, he resigned, having held the Rectorship somewhat less than one year. He removed to St. Thomas's Church on Broadway.

It is needless for me to describe Dr. Hawks. You all know him, and can appreciate his remarkable mental as well as physical endowments. You know that in the power to hold a popular audience in breathless silence he has no superior. He is still in the city, and Rector of a church organization, not having yet a church edifice, but one is in course of erection. The departure of Dr. Hawks nearly emptied the church, depopulated the Sunday-school, and spread desolation all around.

On the 29th of December, 1831, the Rev. John S. Stone, of Connecticut, was elected Rector. On January 9th, 1832, he declined. January 27th, 1832, the Rev. David Moore, son to the former Rector of that name, was elected. February 3d, 1832, the Church was served with an injunction prohibiting the vestry from fixing the salary of the Rector, which by the statute must be determined by the congregation. The vestry contested the point, and employed counsel. The whole matter, however, was compromised, and the suit withdrawn. The Courts have since ruled that the provision alluded to does not apply to churches of our communion. Dr. Moore declined

his invitation. March 30th, 1832, Dr. Moore was elected again. May 5th, 1832, he declined again.

On the 9th of May, 1832, the Rev. William Jackson, of Alexandria, Virginia, was elected, and in June, 1832, he declined. The call was repeated, and on June 10th, 1832, he accepted, the church having been vacant about six months.

In 1834, an association of gentlemen proposed to build a church at the corner of Christie and Delancey streets, but this vestry resisted the plan, and I suppose the result was the erection of St. Bartholomew's Church. In March, 1836, Mr. Jackson obtained leave of absence for a year, and visited his native land—England. The Rev. Zechariah Mead supplied the church in his absence. On March 25th, 1837, he resigned the Rectorship, and removed to Louisville, Kentucky. He was Rector somewhat less than five years.

Though Mr. Jackson was my immediate predecessor, I am more ignorant of any authentic facts from which to form a judgment on his administration of the parish than in regard to any other of the Rectors. The few who remained of the congregation, I found much divided respecting him, and both parties were so unqualified and decided in their opinions, that a disinterested hearer would find it difficult to come to any conclusion. A large proportion of the pews had been abandoned two years before the resignation of Mr. Jackson.

Of Mr. Jackson's fair ability and intense faithfulness no doubt can be entertained. The failings that seemed to have given offence arose, I think, from a sense of official responsibility that was absolutely morbid. As perfection can be predicated of no one, all the qualities, even of the best Christians, are held subject to this law of imperfection. As there are some men so anxiously straight that they are crooked, so some carry their faithfulness in duty in such a demonstrative manner, that it sternly rebukes everybody else, and seems to be perpetually challenging some one to enter the lists, and settle the question of relative faithfulness.

On May 18th, 1837, the present incumbent was unanimously elected Rector, and on May 29th, 1837, he accepted. The Rectorship had been vacant about two months. He entered

upon his duties on July 1st, 1837, twenty-nine years ago to-day. He came to this city, from his native city—Boston—in November, 1833, called by the vestry as the assistant to the Rev. Dr. Hawks, Rector of St. Thomas's. In a few weeks he was called to St. Paul's Church, Albany, and declined; Dr. Hawks being unwilling he should leave him. But the invitation being repeated, he accepted. He was in Albany three years and a half.

After the resignation of Mr. Jackson, the supply of ministrations for St. Stephen's was placed by the committee of this church in the hands of Dr. Hawks, and it was in compliance with his request that, while on a journey, your preacher officiated one Sunday, not at all seeking the Rectorship. It was tendered to him, however, and, after consulting his vestry in St. Paul's, on account of the severity of the climate of Albany, he accepted.

He assumed this position as the seventh Rector—all but one then living—all but two are now dead. Of the history of this church, and especially of his immediate predecessor, he knew nothing. Judge of his surprise, then, when he found himself accused by rumor of having plotted against Mr. Jackson, and driven him from the church. He had seen Mr. Jackson only once, and had never exchanged a word with him or with any one about him. Had he enjoyed the experience he has had since, his surprise at this or anything else would have been less.

On the whole, the parish was remarkably prosperous; and there was no reason to doubt the presence of the divine blessing. Indeed, the most we had to fear was the danger attendant on prosperity; and so Infinite Wisdom seemed to regard our state; for in 1843 occurred one of those events that characterize an age, and from which both the church and myself suffered much; I mean what is called the Carey ordination.

Mr. Arthur Carey, a candidate for holy orders, had passed all his canonical examinations; but being only twenty years of age, while the canon requires a deacon to be twenty-one, he was compelled to wait one year. During this year all his troubles arose. He was accused by two presbyters of the church of a tendency to the Roman Catholic system.



Bishop Onderdonk, in order to give, if possible, entire satisfaction, ordered a committee of eight, the two accusing ministers included, to examine Mr. Carey. I was placed upon the committee, on account of my openly avowed and earnest hostility to everything Romish in our church. Six of the eight assented cheerfully to Mr. Carey's fitness for ordination. The two accusers persisted in their objections, protested publicly in church at the time of ordination, and instituted a state of things unprecedented in the church, distinguished for its love of order, where minorities had been in the habit of submitting gracefully to defeat.

The excitement in the city was immense. The press teemed with pamphlets and newspaper articles, and, as usual, those who knew least about the questions involved made the most noise. The newsboys gained the most *solid* enjoyment, for they made it pay in dollars and cents. Romanism itself never degraded divine truth like this uproar. The Church itself has, in my humble judgment, lost, since that event, much of its accustomed reverence for sacred things, submission to authority, and cheerful surrender of individualism. Since that day the mere possession of a little brief editorial authority sweeps away that charity which is "not puffed up."

Yet, after all, Mr. Carey was pronounced universally a most evangelical preacher, and he died in the bosom of the Protestant Episcopal Church, proving, in the best possible manner, the whole charge against his orthodoxy to be groundless. I shall not take up your time at this late day in explaining the questions involved, on their merits. It is better to let all such miserable panics retire to the tomb of the Capulets. In my humble judgment, Mr. Carey was a giant in intellect and a saint in character.

This being the first marked excitement to which as a public man I had been subjected, in my simplicity I supposed, that all that was required, to restore order, was explanation. Accordingly, I agreed to meet the more clamorous, and be freely catechized. I did so, and my effort seemed to be successful. All professed to be satisfied. But in forty-eight hours from this time the same charges, word for word, and letter for letter,

were industriously circulated, from Dan to Beersheba. I now declined any farther explanation; fell back on my rights as a man; and determined to abide in my silence till this tyranny be over-past. This was the signal for fresh assault. I was threatened, *anonymously*, with all sorts of punishments, human and divine. But not having a very high opinion of the courage that flourishes behind an anonymous letter, I refrained from all words, good and bad, on that subject, and at length the storm was spent, men tired of tongue-wagging, and I was left at rest. Stop a clamor with explanation, indeed! When you extinguish fire with oil you may expect it.

A little more than a year from this time, in 1844, another opportunity of testing the faithfulness of the promise, "As thy day so shall thy strength be," was graciously afforded me, for then occurred the trial, conviction and indefinite suspension of Dr. Benjamin T. Onderdonk, Bishop of the Diocese of New York. To go through all the details of this trial, as well as the premonitory symptoms of it for months and even years before, to lay out before you the reasons why I was willing to be ranked among the friends of Bishop Onderdonk,—how far the Bishop's trial, and the ordination of Mr. Carey, were two parts of one transaction,—that is to say, the one consequent on the other,—how far the common-sense rules of evidence, held as authority in the civil Courts, were over-ruled by a diseased ambition to vindicate the purity of the Church,—how far private prejudice was allowed to influence and distort public judgment,—all this, gone over at the time again and again, I shall not reiterate, for it would not now be interesting to you, or profitable to any one. I will rather call your attention to an attempt made in the General Convention of 1862 to remove the sentence, and restore Dr. Onderdonk to his episcopal duties and prerogatives.

His own Convention, by a nearly unanimous vote, had recommended it; gentlemen, both clerical and lay, who had been known as his opponents, united in asking it; all things seemed to favor it; the Bishop, under the advice of friends, had given a written pledge, that, if restored, he would devolve on his assistant the duties of the diocese, and only visit those churches particularly desiring it.

The Bishop was buoyed up by hope, and seemed to resume his former cheerfulness. His appeal to the House of Bishops had wrung tears from all: when, lo! by a decisive vote, excluding all hope of reconsideration, *the petition was refused*, and the Bishop's hopes were crushed.

From this time he began to sink. The last link that bound him to life was shattered. Just before his death, a presbyter of the church visited him, and, at his own request, used with him the visitation office for the sick, as contained in the Prayer-book. When he came to the rubric directing the officiator to examine the sick man as to his repentance, charity, justice, etc., the Bishop replied to this effect: "I am a poor sinner, and have lived in the habit of repentance for sin, known and unknown; but I declare solemnly to that God before whom I must soon appear in judgment, that *I am unconscious of the offences, for which I have been condemned.*"

And I believe him. He died of a broken heart, literally not figuratively broken. To prove that the Bishops, had they shown mercy, would have risked nothing, his funeral was the largest and most sorrowful ever witnessed in New York. There was an immense array of clergy, and it seemed as if all the hearts of the city had been condensed into one great heart, and that heart throbbed in sympathy with our deeply, deeply afflicted Bishop.

That much-abused playwright, William Shakspeare, through the lips of Portia, in the trial scene of the "Merchant of Venice," teaches us a lesson on mercy, more orthodox than much of our Christian practice. Portia says:

"It is an attribute of God himself,  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,  
When mercy seasons justice. Consider this,  
*That, in the course of justice, none of us*  
*Should see salvation.* We do pray for mercy,  
And that same prayer loth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy."

This congregation, rather reduced in numbers by these several excitements, soon recovered, till, in 1850, the largest amount of pew rent ever received in this church in any one year was

realized. The intense panics to which I had been made a party began, however, to tell upon my nervous system, and the vestry very kindly gave me leave of absence for one year, early in 1853.

For the first time in my life I visited Europe. On the eve of my departure I received an anonymous letter. The penmanship and composition represented a person occupying a respectable position in society. The letter charged me with an intention of going abroad to give in my submission to the Pope: that I knew in my heart that I was a Roman Catholic, and I had better act honestly and avow it. The sentiments expressed in this letter showed that the writer put a very high estimate on his own godliness, and cherished a contempt for the piety of all others.

Ten years had elapsed since the Carey ordination. Ten years of faithful service as a Protestant were not enough to satisfy this very pious man. I leave you to judge whether it is ever a godly act to write an anonymous letter, or whether the same act can be that of an assassin and a Christian. I leave you to judge whether it is a godly act to make a charge not only without evidence, but against evidence. I leave you to judge whether your rights in life or property would be safe in the hands of twelve such men sitting on a jury.

I sailed, however, for Europe, without much concern about this self-appointed censor. I passed over the usual route, and at length found myself in Rome,—stood in awe at that stupendous structure, St. Peter's Church,—listened in rapture to the most entrancing of music,—wondered at the extent of a system having a confessional in Rome for every language on the earth,—heard of its hundred masses before twelve o'clock every day,—received the utmost kindness and courtesy, extending even to a friendly warning not to speak so freely,—the last warning by a priest of courtly and winning address, giving me, too, his official influence to pass that public nuisance, a Neapolitan custom-house;—and in six months from the time I left I returned, as firm a Protestant as ever. What a pity, to spoil the prophecy of my anonymous friend! The contentions of the Christian world are strangely misunderstood. The strife is

not between high church and low church and broad church, but between fiction and reality. All true men understand each other, by whatever name they may be called.

The Roman Church is doubtless historically ancient, but doctrinally the most modern,—more modern, in fact, than many of the sects. She has proved treacherous to the faith committed to her trust, as a branch of the Church Catholic. She is treacherous, not by abstracting from the faith, like the sects, but by adding to it, and what is added has more of the character of Paganism than of Christianity.

During the period of twenty-nine years of my Rectorship, I have resigned three times, once unconditionally, twice conditionally. The vestry, each time, declined accepting the resignation. This was noble and generous of them, since the majority of them differed from me on those exciting subjects to which I have referred. Difference of opinion on points not touching fundamentals ought not to separate men from each other. There should be mutual forbearance and toleration. If you have a pastor afraid to act on his own calm convictions of duty, you have a tool, a thing, and not a man fitted to instruct and guide in spiritual matters. If you have one who is constantly invading the opinions of his vestry and people, and enforcing his own crude notions as if they were the canon law of the Church, you have a tyrant, and not a shepherd.

But far beyond my deserts I have enjoyed the confidence of many friends, not only in this congregation but in the Church at large, and even in the various denominations; so that I am persuaded that no compromise of essential truth is required as the price at which friendship is to be obtained. My name was solicited as a candidate for the Episcopate of a distant Western Diocese. But I declined. I was nominated in this diocese. It was at a time when Dr. Wainright, the friend of my youth, was a candidate, and I could not forego the opportunity to work for his election; and I received more solid enjoyment in seeing that work successful, and that success everywhere and by all meeting a most hearty approval, than I could ever have received from my own election (were that possible) to an office the last to be the object of human ambition. For though the



Scripture saith, "He that desireth the office of a Bishop desireth a good thing," yet it is the office that is good, not the desire.

God has blessed me with a remarkable degree of health, since I have been absent from duty, on account of illness, in twenty-nine years, only four times, and I have required no medical attendance for thirty years. And yet I was pronounced incurably consumptive at an early period of life. Self-control, cheerful trust, a conscience void of offence, and a determined will, all guided by motives drawn from the cross of Christ Jesus, our dear Lord, will do much to counteract bodily tendencies.

"You have had, indeed," says one, "a bed of roses." Granted. But allow me to add, "*There is no rose without a thorn.*" Yet, in gratitude, I must say, it is not less a rose because it has a thorn. The thorns have been comparatively few and point-less. "I have always considered it my duty," said a prominent member of this congregation to me, "to make the Rector as unhappy as possible, for fear he will love this world too well." "Sir," I replied, "should you ever need any testimony as to the faithfulness with which you have discharged that duty, call on me. My experience is ample on that subject." This is a fair sample of the luxury of clerical life. "The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." But, then, a priest of the Church has the luxury of doing good, to live for endurance on his own part and benevolence toward others. And this is a luxury, a luxury I should delight to see enjoyed by many of our rich men. The secret of human happiness is to live for the real happiness of others, and no one but the consistent Christian can do this.

In closing, I might array before you the statistics of twenty-nine years; but there is more of personal display in this than suits my taste, and especially as the records under the administration of Mr. Stroebeck, Dr. Moore, and partly of Dr. Feltus, are lost, and I must place the other Rectors in unpleasant comparison with them. Besides, though it is said figures cannot lie, I must beg leave to deny that, and to say that figures, in the hands of dishonest skill, may be made to lie like anything else. A false nature defaces and deforms all it touches. There is a forced, unnatural importance attached to statistics in all departments of enterprise.

It remains, then, only to state, that the abandonment of this edifice, and the removal of St. Stephen's Church, in its corporate character, to a more eligible position, has been determined, on the ground of absolute necessity. Nothing but necessity can excuse it, and nothing but its necessity would have obtained my sanction. I deeply sympathize with those who mourn the removal of this old landmark, and more especially the removal of the honored dead from what was supposed, fifty years ago, to be their last resting-place.(2)

Never has a work of this kind been conducted with more quietness and conciliation, or met with more submission and thorough persuasion of its necessity. No serious objection has come from any party having any personal interest in the matter. The vestry were unanimous in their decision, and yet felt the most sincere desire, if possible, to avoid the change. I have done all in my power to retain the property for the use of the Protestant Episcopal Church, but in vain.

Some think that I should have resisted the removal of this church at any cost; but I do not so read my duty. I have never pressed it. I have simply followed the leading of divine Providence. You remember the old saying: "A wise man *seldom* changes his mind, a weak man *often*, a fool *never*." To refuse to listen when God speaks to us from the cloud of his Providence, is as insensible as to be carried about by every wind that blows. It is only repeating the empty resistance of the courtiers of Canute to the laws of nature, to contend with that necessity which knows no law.

And then, too, if we follow the directing finger of Providence, present evil will result in substantial good. Though I may not live to enjoy it, the parish will reap great gain from this exodus. It is for want of broad catholic views of the kingdom of Christ, that so many take seriously a trifle like the removal, or even extinction, of a single church. Is there no security in the Church's charter: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world"? Thus is her sacred ministry perpetuated. "The gates of hell" (or outward violence) "shall not prevail against" the Church. Thus is secured the stability of the Church in her corporate or catholic character.

The extinction, then, of an individual congregation, the

departure from the faith of an entire branch of this true vine, need not impair the faith of believers in the promise of God. He will fulfil his promise, though it be by a miracle. It is our privilege to be members of Christ's body, and parties in the extension of its healing properties to individuals and to nations. Rally about me, beloved, for this noble purpose of life; for our own salvation and the salvation of others. Let my declining years be relieved by those cheerful countenances and encouraging words which, under God, have been my solace in seasons of trial and affliction. I am still hopeful, not so much in myself, as in my dear Lord, who condescends to use such a poor worm of the dust for such high and holy purposes.

As I look, for the last time, perhaps, on this church, venerable, as we count years in this age of new things and rapid changes,—a procession, remarkable for numbers as for variety, passes before my mind's eye. Nearly one-half of this goodly show commenced its march within my own Rectorship. Time would fail me to count or to paint it. To gather up the fragments of thirty years of ministerial experience, with no prompter but memory, is no easy task. This church is not without witness that the great purpose for which our dear Lord established his Church,—the moral renovation of men,—has not been forgotten or neglected. By the light of the pale, cold winter's moon—the ground like flint—at two o'clock in the morning, in the last half hour of life, I have baptized the life-long infidel, defiant, boastful, while he dared, but retracting at once a life's work, and proclaiming his faith and trust in Him whose name he had pronounced before only in blasphemy.

To another large class of the "proscribed" this church has been a Magdalene Society. Let one be selected. She is not one of the coarse, brutal kind. She is, indeed, weak in intellect, and therefore disposed to lean on something without and superior to herself. Confiding, trustful, affectionate, but simple, she had sinned indeed, but was more sinned against than sinning. She had trusted one, her superior in nothing but that which distinguishes Milton's Satan,—intellect. He betrayed her, abandoned her, and so inflicted a wrong from which she never recovered. At this juncture I was instrumental in directing her guileless heart to Him, the Saviour of the world,—to Him



patient toward sin and waywardness when willing to be taught,—severe only with the arrogant and self-asserting,—considerate for others, forgetful only of himself,—the divine Son, having authority to judge men,—yet the good Shepherd laying down his life for the sheep,—the Lord of nature, of human life and death, and of the life to come, yet full of sympathy for human sorrow and suffering; Himself a sufferer, yet a sufferer for others.

She had found one who, with infinite power, had infinite pity; who would never betray, never forsake her. Her consumption advanced slowly but surely. As the disease would occasionally relax its hold, it was sad to see, from the mere force of habit, her skeleton neck and wrists dressed out with the jewelry of days of vanity; not now from the love of dress, which doubtless had been a besetting sin, as it is now of thousands; but to remind her from what a world of frivolous folly she had escaped.

Under a Christian influence her intellect strengthened; but that deep, deep sorrow nothing could cure. Death came at last, and gently rocked her to the sleep in Jesus. A post-mortem examination showed that the phrase, broken heart, is not always figurative. There was rupture in that organ. Rest, rest, poor Maria: go and sin no more. A ministering angel shalt thou be where impenitence cannot enter.

I will not detain you with the recital of many more cases, worse and better than these, which would, after all, each be but the representative of a class. I claim for this church that it has been most tentatively doing the legitimate work of a Christian church in this community, and on this ground deserves continued support and sympathy. To whatever class this church may hereafter minister, may it live near to Jesus, by copying those features of character that distinguish him,—compassion, mercy, tenderness, benevolence, truth.

I desire, this day, while in the enjoyment of health, to say: that I forgive all who have attempted my injury, and ask forgiveness of God and of my fellow Christians for any *unintentional* injury I have done them. This Church shall increase, but I must decrease. Let me die with my harness on, faithful to the last. It is all I have to ask. God bless you and your families.

## APPENDIX.

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1. The following statement is made for the satisfaction of the Church public, and especially the venerable corporation of Trinity Church, to whom, under God, this church is indebted for its existence. St. Stephen's Church has never been supported on pew rents alone. When the church is filled to its utmost capacity, as it has been during a large part of the last twenty-nine years, the amount of pew rent cannot much exceed two thousand dollars. Embarrassment in meeting the current expenses, placed at a very low standard, has been frequent; and during the present Rectorship several applications have been made to the corporation of Trinity Church for relief, but without success. In no one case within the last thirty years has any aid been afforded. The church being crowded, and an air of prosperity prevailing, it was probably thought that the church was affected with the begging mania. The consequence of all this has been the accumulation of a debt, and a sacrifice on the part of the Rector which he could ill afford. After the erection and sale of vaults for interment, the income from those belonging to the church amounted to one thousand dollars per annum. But an ordinance of the corporation of the city closed up this source of revenue, and brought on new difficulties. Then the lots generously given by Trinity Church, rose in value, and the leases, fortunately just expiring, fully made up the former deficiency. But in the meantime the expense of everything had proportionably increased, while, at the same time, the removals from the neighborhood and the uncomfatableness of the city cars on Sunday greatly diminished the numbers who could meet this expense. The yearly income is about four thousand dollars, the yearly expenses about four thousand five hundred dollars, leaving the church in debt every year, with every department inadequately supported, and no prospect of improvement. To meet this state of things the neighborhood was canvassed, but no results obtained, except indifference, more or less intense. Romanism, infidelity or stolid indifference prevail. Had the church the means of supporting a certain class without labor, as a special favor they would attend church. The idea of a mission now suggested itself. To meet this the church required repairs, involving an outlay of five thousand dollars; the sexton's house must be rebuilt, costing eight thousand dollars; buildings erected for the mission on the site of the

churchyard, costing ten thousand dollars; and the dead removed as now, costing ten thousand dollars. To meet this the church had not a cent. The vestry endeavored to interest the City Mission, the Howard Mission, the Guild of the Holy Cross, but for various reasons all failed. Two or three of Trinity vestry were consulted, but no encouragement was given to hope for anything for some years to come. The endowment given by Trinity might have been seriously impaired, and it is thought, in legal quarters, entirely used up, if it were used in the service of the church. To this the Rector would not for one moment listen. That which was given for the security of St. Stephen's Church should never be sacrificed for the Rector's private interests, or in such a way as to make the extinction of the church certain. Nothing was left for us to do but to sell and obtain a location more favorable to success. If there has been any error, it must be that to which wiser and better men than we are liable. Let those who condemn ask themselves if they ever extended even a finger to relieve.

2. The agent in the removal of the bodies from the yard was Henry B. Price, son of the Rector.

# Names of Wardens and Vestrymen of St. Stephen's Church, since 1805.

## WARDENS.

Jacob C. Mott.  
Cornelius Schnyder.  
Thomas Gibbons.  
Henry Pope.  
James Smith.  
John Drake.  
George Warner.

George Haws.  
Joseph Chadwick.  
Daniel Mersereau  
Ernest Fink.  
Foster Nostrand.  
James W. Dominick.  
John H. Hurtin.

Jacob Aims.  
Isaac Fryer.  
Bezaleel Howe.  
Robert A. Sands.  
Bronson Peck.

## VESTRYMEN.

Thomas Gibbons.  
Gordon Mott.  
Benjamin Beekman.  
John Fash.  
Isaac Emmons.  
Benjamin Clark.  
Abraham Fowler.  
George Beck.  
Jacob C. Mott.  
Adolph Carter.  
James Gillender.  
William Lang.  
Henry Pope  
John Williams.  
Richard Mott.  
Jacob Lobb.  
John Drake  
James Smith.  
Isaac Emmons.  
John Pell.  
Jonas Humbert.  
Tunis Bergh.  
John Poillon.  
James Scott.  
David Marsh.  
Abraham Vanbuskerk.  
Mark Moore.  
Andrew Yelverton.  
Moses Jarvis.  
Daniel Mersereau.  
Eliad Davis.  
George Haws.  
Thomas Tripler.  
James W. Dominick.  
James Dobbin.  
Joseph Chadwick.

Alexander Stewart.  
Ernest Fink.  
Jacob Aims.  
Foster Nostrand.  
Nickolas J. Quackenbos.  
Joseph N. Lord.  
Thomas Shapter.  
John H. Hurtin.  
John H. Williams.  
George Ehringer.  
Charles H. Roach.  
John Messenger.  
Marimus Willett.  
Joseph Desnoues.  
William N. Chadwick.  
Asa Day.  
John Scoles.  
W. N. Seymour.  
Elisha K. Belcher.  
John M. Seaman.  
William Wilson.  
Benjamin Loder.  
Samuel Lynes.  
Francis Smith.  
Jared L. Moore.  
Richard E. Purdy.  
Caleb S. Benedict.  
William Weed, Jr.  
Charles J. Chipp.  
Isaac Fryer.  
Joseph W. Winans.  
Robert A. Sands  
Bezaleel Howe.  
S. Jones Mumford.  
Elisha Brooks.  
James L. Morgan.

John Brooks.  
Henry W. Boswell.  
John A. Poillon.  
Thomas Netterville.  
Abel Corwin.  
William C. Greig.  
Joseph S. Taylor.  
Robert T. Haws.  
Henry L. Ritch.  
Charles Swift.  
A. W. King.  
James H. Lyles.  
Bronson Peck.  
Jay Jarvis.  
Edwin Houghton.  
Silas Davis.  
N. G. Bradford, Jr.  
Charles H. Richardson.  
Russel Crane.  
L. D. Burdett.  
Charles G. Smull.  
Henry W. Whiting.  
E. D. Brown.  
Joseph Priest.  
Walter L. Childs.  
Garwood Ferris.  
Henry B. Price.  
Henry Richardson.  
Seaman R. Fowler.  
Richard F. Purdy.  
Matthew E. Baker.  
Hiram Raynor.  
Samuel K. Barton.  
Alexander H. Stewart.  
George B. Raynor.



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